

Brain Health

When people think about staying fit, they generally think from the neck down. But the health of your brain plays a critical role in almost everything you do: thinking, feeling, remembering, working, and playing — even sleeping.

The good news is we now know there's a lot you can do to help keep your brain healthy as you age. The Alzheimer's Association Maintain Your Brain® is a public health and education campaign designed to help all Americans understand steps they can take now to make brain health part of their overall goals for healthy aging. A few simple lifestyle changes can help keep you fit mentally and physically for years to come, and might also reduce your risk of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.

10 ways to Maintain Your Brain®

1. Head first

Good health starts with your brain. It's one of the most vital body organs, and it needs care and maintenance.

2. Take brain health to heart

What's good for the heart is good for the brain. Do something every day to prevent heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and stroke — all of which can increase your risk of Alzheimer's.

3. Your numbers count

Keep your body weight, blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels within recommended ranges.

4. Feed your brain

Research suggests that a diet rich in dark vegetables and fruits may help protect brain cells. Eat less fat and more antioxidant-rich foods.

5. Work your body

Physical exercise keeps the blood flowing to the brain and may encourage new brain cells. Walking just 30 minutes a day can help keep both body and mind active.

6. Jog your mind

Keeping your brain active and engaged strengthens brain cells and the connections between them, and may even trigger growth of new cells. Read, write, play games, learn new things, do crossword puzzles.

7. Connect with others

Leisure activities that combine physical, mental and social elements may be most likely to prevent dementia. Be social, converse, volunteer, join a club or take a class.

8. Heads up! Protect your brain

Take precautions against head injuries. Always wear a seat belt; unclutter your house to avoid falls; and wear a helmet when cycling.

9. Use your head

Avoid unhealthy habits. Don't smoke, drink excessive alcohol or use street drugs.

10. Think ahead – start today!

You can do something today to protect your tomorrow.

The science behind these recommendations

While there is strong evidence pointing to ways to support brain health and possibly reduce risk of dementia, it's important to understand that there is no way to predict what will happen to any particular person. Maintain Your Brain® does not guarantee individual health outcomes.

More information

To learn more about Maintain Your Brain®, visit www.alz.org/maintainyourbrain.

The Alzheimer's Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer care, support and research.

Updated July 2007